



The [International Day for Disaster Reduction](#) will be celebrated all over the world on the 13 October. A day to celebrate how people and communities are reducing disasters risks and raising awareness about the importance of this topic.

The theme of the IDDR 2012 is: "*Women and Girls - the [in]Visible Force of Resilience*".

The **key messages** of the IDDR 12 are:

- Empower women & girls for a safer tomorrow
- Women & girls are powerful agents of change
- A resilient community is a gender-sensitive community

Women and Girls are powerful agents of change. They have unique knowledge and skills that are crucial when addressing or managing disaster risks.

The International Disaster Reduction day 2012 will:

1. Celebrate the contribution that women and girls are making before, during and after disasters.
2. Highlight that the ability of women and girls to contribute is hindered by exclusion from participation and decision-making in disaster risk reduction and management processes as well as programmes and by poor understanding of gender inequality.
3. Move beyond the perception of women and girls as victims.
4. Present evidence of actions and initiatives by women and girls.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Ms. Margareta Wahlstrom, said in a press release today "Over half of the 200 million people affected by disasters each year are female. The best disaster recovery programmes in the world involve women who have survived such events. If we are to build true disaster resilience we need to put the emphasis on their greater involvement before disasters strike".

"The focus of this year's International Day for Disaster Reduction is on women and girls whose efforts to build resilience to disasters often go unrecognized. Women are responsible for many of the key strategic decisions of daily life. In many parts of the world this includes securing food, water and energy. They have real impact when they are fully involved in community planning for disaster risk reduction.

"Discussions have now opened on the development of a new Post-2015 international framework for disaster risk reduction. We have learned from implementation of the existing agreement, the Hyogo Framework for Action, that national planning for disaster relief and recovery often excludes considerations of gender-based vulnerability and risks. One important remedy is to empower more women and girls to engage as volunteers and develop careers in disaster management."

[Full press release](#) .

Additional links:

- [International Day for Disaster Reduction \(UN webpage\)](#)
- [International Day for Disaster Reduction \(UN-ISDR webpage\)](#)
- [Campaign page](#)
- [Resources \(logos, videos, etc...\)](#)
- [Secretary-General's message](#)

In Europe;

The IDDR has received recognition from Ms. [Kristalina Georgieva](#) , EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response and Ms.

[Connie Hedegaard](#)

, EU Commissioner for Climate Action, who both have made videos/statements in the context of the IDDR 12.

Events taking place in Europe in the context of the IDDR

In Europe, many countries are organizing events both on national and local level. To mention a few, the City of Nice will organize a conference in the context of the IDDR to be opened by the First Deputy Mayor. The Municipal Service of Civil Protection (Amadora-PORTUGAL) with the Environmental Group of the New University of Lisbon and the Portugal Civil Protection Group will organize a conference commemorating the 'International Day for Disaster Reduction. UNDP/SEESAC will organize a round table discussion at the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia on the topic of disaster risk reduction and building resilience. The National School of Civil Protection in Spain will organize an event on the 10th of October. In Italy, 100 Italian cities local volunteers, organized by the Italian National Civil Protection, will meet the citizens to inform on seismic risk and disaster risk reduction. Sweden (Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, MSB) has published information about IDDR on their web site to inform cities about the Hyogo Framework for Action and its purpose. The news item also mentions the work that the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) is doing to promote gender balance in international humanitarian operations after catastrophes but also to involve women and girls more in preventing such catastrophes.

In Brussels the International Event was strongly promoted within the Open Days, 10th European Week of Regions and Cities (8-11 October). To find out more on the DRR events see: www.opendays.eu